

CLAIMS

- 1 1. A method for scheduling the distribution of content utilizing a network,
2 comprising the steps of:
 - 3 (a) accessing content in a database;
 - 4 (b) generating schedule data by inputting preferences to a scheduling
5 algorithm , the scheduling algorithm being based on predetermined methods of
6 processing input preferences relating to parameters selected from the group consisting
7 of: frequency, interval, time of play, trigger events, and category filtering; and
8 (c) distributing the content and the schedule data to a plurality of output
9 devices utilizing a network.
- 1 2. A method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising the step of causing the
2 output devices to communicate the content to an audience.
- 1 3. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the content communication is by way of
2 a visual display.
- 1 4. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the content communication is by way of
2 electronic broadcast.
- 1 5. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the content communication is by way of
2 audio/visual broadcast.
- 1 6. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the content communication is by way of
2 audio/visual display.
- 1 7. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the input frequency preference relates to
2 a relative weight associated with each content, and wherein the processing of input
3 preferences includes:
 - 4 assigning a weight to the schedule data associated with each content,
 - 5 Whereby in response to the schedule data, the output devices communicate the
6 content preferentially according to the assigned weight.

1 8. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the input interval preference relates to a
2 recurring period associated with a play of the content and wherein the processing of
3 input preferences includes:

4 assigning a recurring period to the schedule data associated with each content,
5 whereby in response to the schedule data the output devices cause the content to be
6 communicated at the beginning of the recurring period.

1 9. A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the input preference relating to the
2 interval includes an offset which delays communication of the content following the
3 beginning of the recurring period.

1 10. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the input time of play preference relates
2 to a time of day, and wherein the processing of input preferences includes:

3 assigning a particular time of day to the schedule data associated with each
4 content, whereby in response to the schedule data, the output devices cause the
5 content to be communicated at the particular time of day.

1 11. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the trigger events preference relates to
2 the occurrence of an event external to the algorithm, wherein the processing of input
3 preferences includes:

4 assigning an external event to be recognized to the schedule data associated
5 with the content, whereby under control of the schedule data, the output devices
6 communicate the content upon occurrence of the external event.

1 12. A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the event to be recognized includes an
2 asynchronous request.

1 13. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the content includes a tag associated
2 therewith, the tag indicating whether or not the content is available for communication.

1 14. A method as recited in claim 13 wherein the tag indicates whether or not the
2 content is available for communication to an audience in a specified venue.

1 15. A method as recited in claim 13 wherein the tag indicates whether or not the
2 content is available for communication to a particular audience during a specified period
3 of time.

1 16. An apparatus for scheduling the distribution of content to a plurality of output
2 devices utilizing a network, comprising:
3 (a) means for accessing content in a database;
4 (b) means for generating schedule data in response to the input of
5 preferences to a scheduling algorithm, the scheduling algorithm being based on
6 predetermined methods of processing input preferences relating to parameters selected
7 from the group consisting of frequency, interval, time of play, trigger events, and
8 category filtering; and
9 (c) means for distributing the content and the schedule data to a plurality of
10 output devices utilizing a network.

1 17. An apparatus as recited in claim 16, and further comprising:
2 a plurality of output devices; and
3 means for causing each output device to communicate the content to an
4 audience.

1 18. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein at least some of said output
2 devices are visual display devices and the content communication is by way of visual
3 display.

1 19. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein at least some of said output
2 devices are electronic transmitters and the content communication is by way of
3 electronic broadcast.

1 20. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein at least some of said output
2 devices are transmitters and the content communication is by way of audio/visual
3 broadcast.

1 21. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, at least some of said output devices are
2 display devices and wherein the content communication is by way of audio/visual
3 display.

1 22. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the input frequency preference
2 relates to a weight associated with each content and wherein the processing of input
3 preferences includes:

4 assigning a weight to the schedule data associated with the content, wherein in
5 response to the schedule data the output devices communicate the content
6 preferentially according to the assigned weight.

1 23. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the input interval preference relates
2 to a recurring period associated with a particular content, and wherein the processing of
3 input preferences includes:

4 assigning the recurring period to the schedule data associated with the
5 particular content, whereby in response to the schedule data the output devices cause
6 the content to be communicated at the beginning of the recurring period.

1 24. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the input preferences relating to
2 the interval include an offset which delays communication of the content following the
3 beginning of the recurring period.

1 25. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the input time of play preference
2 relates to a time of day, and wherein the processing of input preferences includes:

3 assigning a particular time of day to the schedule data associated with the
4 content, whereby in response to the schedule data, the output devices cause the
5 content to be communicated at the particular time of day.

1 26. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the trigger events preference
2 relates to the occurrence of an event external to the algorithm, and wherein the
3 processing of input preferences includes:

4 assigning an external event to be recognized to the schedule data associated
5 with the content, whereby under control of the schedule data, the output devices
6 communicate the content upon occurrence of the external event.

1 27. An apparatus as recited in claim 26, wherein the external event to be recognized
2 includes an asynchronous request.

1 28. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the content includes a tag
2 associated therewith, the tag indicating whether or not the content is available for
3 communication.

1 29. An apparatus as recited in claim 28, wherein the tag indicates whether or not the
2 content is available for communication to an audience in a specified venue.

1 30. An apparatus as recited in claim 28, wherein the tag indicates whether or not the
2 content is available for communication to an audience during a specified period of time.

1 31. A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium for scheduling
2 the distribution of content to a plurality of output devices utilizing a network, comprising:
3 (a) a code segment that accesses content in a database;
4 (b) a code segment including a scheduling algorithm that generates schedule
5 data in response to input preferences, the scheduling algorithm being based on
6 predetermined methods of processing input preferences relating to parameters selected
7 from the group consisting of: frequency, interval, time of play, trigger events, and
8 category filtering; and
9 (c) a code segment that causes distribution of the content and the schedule
10 data to a plurality of output devices utilizing a network.

1 32. A computer program as recited in claim 31, and further comprising a code
2 segment that causes the output devices to communicate the content to an audience.

1 33. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the content communication
2 is by way of a visual display.

1 34. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the content communication
2 is by way of electronic broadcast.

1 35. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the content communication
2 is by way of audio/visual broadcast.

1 36. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the content communication
2 is by way of audio/visual display.

1 37. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the input frequency
2 preference relates to a weight of each content relative to other content and wherein the
3 processing of input preferences includes a code segment for assigning a weight to the
4 schedule data associated with the content, whereby in response to the schedule data
5 the output devices are caused communicate the content preferentially according to the
6 assigned weight.

1 38. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the input interval preference
2 relates to a recurring period associated with communication of the content, and
3 wherein the processing of input preferences includes:
4 assigning a recurring period to the schedule data associated with the content,
5 whereby in response to the schedule data the output devices cause the content to be
6 communicated at the beginning of the recurring period.

1 39. A computer program as recited in claim 38, wherein the input preferences
2 relating to the interval include an offset which delays communication of the content
3 following the beginning of the recurring period.

1 40. A computer program as recited in claim ____, wherein the input time of play
2 preference relates to a time of day, and wherein the processing of input preferences
3 includes:
4 assigning a particular time of day to the schedule data associated with each
5 content, whereby in response to the schedule data, the output devices cause the
6 content to be communicated at the particular time of day.

1 41. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the trigger events
2 preference relates to the occurrence of an event external to the algorithm, and wherein
3 the processing of input preferences includes:

4 assigning an external event to be recognized to the schedule data associated
5 with the content, whereby in response to the schedule data the output devices
6 communicate the content upon occurrence of the external event.

1 42. A computer program as recited in claim 41, wherein the external event includes
2 an asynchronous request.

1 43. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the content includes a tag
2 associated therewith, the tag indicating whether or not the content is available for a
3 communication.

1 44. A computer program as recited in claim 43, wherein the tag indicates whether or
2 not the content is available for communication to an audience in a specified venue.

1 45. A computer program as recited in claim 43, wherein the tag indicates whether or
2 not the content is available for [communication to an audience during a specified period
3 of time.